Contamination of Drinking Water

3494. SHRI BANWARI LAL PUROHIT :
SHRI PRADIP BHATTACHARYA :

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether the World Health Organisation has submitted a report on arsenic contamination of drinking water in several parts of West Bengal;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether a large chunk of population in West Bengal has been suffering from arsenic contamination;

(d) whether the Government propose to provide special Central assistance to the State Government to tackle the disease; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY) : (a) World Health Organisation has forwarded a report of the study undertaken by two WHO consultants namely, Dr. K.S. Subramanian and Dr. Michael J. Kosnett on arsenic contamination of groundwater in eight districts of West Bengal.

(b) The report contains the following major recommendations :

(i) The Government of West Bengal should establish a systematic programme to ascertain the extent of arsenic contamination in ground water throughout the State.

(ii) Drinking water sources containing an elevated concentration of arsenic should be replaced with alternative sources at an accelerated pace.

(iii) Programmes to ascertain the extent of the health problems associated with arsenic exposure should be expanded.

(iv) An expanded local and regional medical programme is required for arsenic induced diseases.

(v) Establishment of an extensive programme of public and professional education on arsenic related health problems.

(vi) A high level office/programme, specifically dedicated to the arsenic problem should be set up by the Health Deptt. of the Government of West Bengal.

(c) According to a survey of April, 1996 conducted by the Government of West Bengal, the total population at risk is around 45 lakhs in the State.

(d) and (e) The Union Government have made the following releases of funds to the State of West Bengal for supply of safe drinking water :

Year	Rs.in lakhs
1993-94	480.92
1994-95	607.04
1995-96	2873.79

Gastro-Enteritis

3495. DR. KRUPASINDHU BHOI : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether the cases of gastro-enteritis have been incresed in the Capital;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the details of the steps taken to provide proper treatment to the patients suffaring from gastro enteritis?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY) : (a) Government of National Capital of Territory of Delhi has informed that the number of Gastro Enteritis/Cholera cases have shown a declining trend during the last three years in the capital.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) The Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi have chalked out a detailed action plan for treatment and prevention of seasonal diseases including gastro enteritis. Setting up of Oral Rehydration Therapy Centres in the out Patient Department of all dispensaries and hospitals in the main component of the Action Plan for providing treatment to the patients. The Action Plan also include surveillance and monitoring, supply of Oral Rehydration Salts, adequate supply of potable water, distribution of Chlorine tablets, environmental sanitation, food hygiene, health education etc.

Mandatory Test for HIV Infection

3496. SHRI BIJOY HANDIQUE : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether the attention of the Government has been drawn to the controversy involved in mandatory testing of certain population groups, especially jail inmates, for HIV infection;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) whether the Government have followed the guidelines formulated by the WHO in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY) : (a) and (b) As envisaged in 'National HIV Testing Policy', the mandatory testing for HIV infection of any population group including jail inmates is not recommended. Mandatory testing is only done for screening of blood (not the donor) to aliminate blood transmissible diseases including HIV/AIDS.

(c) The present document on resting policy for HIV is prepared as per guidelines formulated by WHO and consultation with various experts.

Medical Treatment

3497. SHRI JAI PRAKASH AGARWAL : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether the wounded soldiers of the present Government of Afganistan are being sent to India for medical treatment;

(b) whether the medical treatment to majority of these soldiers is being provided in the private hospitals and nursing homes located in various parts of Delhi;

(c) if so, the number of wounded soldiers receiving medical treatment in India;

(d) whether the Government of India is bearing the expenses on medical treatment being given to them;

(e) if so, the total amount borne by the Government in this regard;

(f) whether any agreement has been reached in this regard; and

(g) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) We have no information in this regard.

(c) to (g) Does not arise.

Minister's Discretionary Grant

3498. SHRI RAMASHRAYA PRASAD SINGH : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) the number of applications received by the Government through the Membars of Parliament to grant financial assistance from Minister's Discretionary Grant to the needy and poor OBC landless families of Andhra Pradesh during 1996-97 and 1997-98;

(b) whether the Government have provided grants to these applicants;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY) : (a) to (d) During 1996-97, 3 applications were received from Members of Parliament recommending financial assistance to 3 patients from Andhra Pradesh. During 1997-98 only one such case was received. These cases could not be considered for want of specific details which are awaited. One case was not covered under the existing policy and hence was not acceeded to.

Mica Welfare Fund

3499. SHRI R.L.P. VERMA : Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state :

(a) the income and expenditure of Mica Welfare Fund during the last three years, year-wise;

(b) the number of Mica workers benefited in each region under various welfare measures during the last three years;

(c) the efforts made for improving dwindling Mica Fund during last three years;

(d) whether the Government propose to lavy cess on internal consumption of Mica; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR) : (a) A statement-I showing income and expenditure under Mica Mines Labour Welfare Fund is enclosed.

(b) A statement-II showing the number of beneficiaries under Mica Mines Labour Welfare Fund, scheme-wise and region-wise during the last three years is enclosed.

(c) to (e) There has been a steady decline in production of Mica in the recent years primarily on account of falling demand due to development of cheaper substitutes. Imposition of any additional cess or tax could further depress the demand by increasing Mica prices and is therefore not being contemplated

Statement-I

Income and Expenditure for the last three years

(Rs. in thousands)

Year	Income	Expenditure
1994-95	14,892	23,147
1995-96	20,968	22,683
1996-97	20,347	22,346